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Silent Voice

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Silent Voice

José Manzo

I've heard, witnessed and experienced hundreds of injustices ever since I can remember, too many, I've lost track. I have to admit that before understanding what had happened, I believed it depended on luck and it wasn't necessarily an injustice. Luck caused most of this pain, but no, it was much more than luck; it was class, gender, sex, race, sexuality, and culture. Your background! The one moment where I first felt guilt for not standing up and ending an injustice was the one that my best friends had to go through. An injustice that not many people realize had happened and its outcome became unnoticed; an opportunity taken away.

At times I think of the teachers that ruined his whole education career by expecting nothing from him, by having no hope, and always looking at him as if he was the worst. He went to school to learn and was taught to sit down and to be quiet. I always wondered what his thoughts at night were, I wondered if he ever thought about going back to school and finishing. He might if it wasn't for the teachers that wouldn't give him an opportunity.

Maybe it was because his father was the town drunk, or maybe because his last name reminded the teachers of trouble. Teachers would compile all of his previous flaws and would professionally say that he wasn't meant for school. It never occurred to them that maybe all he needed was the support and hope that would communicate that he could succeed, instead of receiving the same answer every darn time, "You're a bad student!"

It is the guilt of injustice that I still have that makes me question myself, for if I had stepped in, maybe he would have graduated with me. It was injustice of being picked-on and being the example of who not to be, as if he had chosen the life he was born into. The obstacles that got in my way, that prevented me

from doing something, were my age at the time and a voice that was not being heard. Now, I understand the obstacles he faced and I don't feel sympathy, but a hunger and an eagerness to change the way teachers shape the future of hundreds of kids.

Reflection

During my Chican@/Latin@ Lives class we read books with very creative writing styles that sparked an interest in me and made me want to write with more style and tone. Soon my writing assignments turned into an opportunity to expand myself as a writer, allowing myself to incorporate a part of me into my writing. The first thing I noticed was that I began to critically analyze my writing more often, focusing on quality work instead of quantity. Then I started to try different writing styles and learned how to create my own style of writing. Throughout the whole semester, I was never bored with any writing assignment since I was able to enjoy writing more. I soon realized that I wanted a complicated yet simple writing style. However, when I started to write my writing made sense to me since, I knew what my goal was for myself, but not so much to the reader.

Consequently, during the peer reviews I realized that the lack of transition words made my writing sound chopped. One of the biggest changes that occurred during my writing was becoming conscious and aware of my audience at all times and making sure that they would be able to understand me. At this point I was aware of my mistakes and was able to learn from them. I started to add and change things around to make my writing flow and sound better. Being encouraged to write creatively made me become interested in poems and caused me to start writing short poems too. Therefore, when I write now I think of word choice and then sort it out in the best way to be able to get my argument across. This writing opportunity helped me a lot as a college freshmen since I was able to take into account new writing skills I had never before been allowed to; I was learning from my own experience.